



**L**ife in the barracks is a constant roller coaster. The day begins when the bugle sounds for formation. Knobs fly down the spiral stairs to orders screamed by upper-class sergeants, and the sound of slamming doors echoes through the battalion. The day is a maze of breakfast, class, lunch, class, PT, dinner and ESP (evening study period). When the lights go out at 2300 hours, the dissonance seems to stop as quickly as it began, and first battalion becomes dark, still and quiet as its 500 occupants find a few hours of sleep before waking up and starting all over again.

Walking through the battalion sally port for the first time as a sophomore with relaxed shoulders and normal posture, I feel relief knowing that the days of walking 120 steps a minute with a rigid back are over. During meals in the loud mess hall, I no longer sit with a stiff back; instead, I enjoy the company and conversation of my classmates.

The life of a third-class cadet is rather uneventful during the first semester of classes. Junior and senior classes train knobs while the sophomore classes keep the company's four wooden rank boards updated with the names of rank holders, academic frontrunners and athletes.

## In the second semester, sophomores undergo a dramatic change in responsibility.

Keeping a neat room and maintaining a proper appearance are also priorities. A proper uniform entails perfectly ironed shirt and pants, a regulation hair-cut and a clean shave. Shoes must have a mirror shine and brass buckles must be flawless. In the second semester, sophomores undergo a dramatic change in responsibility. As corporals in charge of the training and inspection of freshmen, a proper appearance is important to provide a good model for the wide-eyed, bracing knobs who are always expected to excel during formation.



Friendships expand through barracks life. Nightly talks with classmates while leaning against the cool railings of the battalion galleries build class unity. Close friends find comfort in sharing family problems and other confidences. I spend many Friday nights staying up late, dusting shelves and buffing floors for an SMI (Saturday morning inspection). As a sophomore I receive longer general leave on weekends and Wednesday afternoons. The Wednesday break usually finds me lying in the hot sun at Folly Beach, a relaxing few hours in a busy week's schedule.

The majority of school memories that will remain with a cadet occur behind the concrete walls of the battalions through the four years of a cadet's life. This life's experience is one that has made me the person I am, and I will remember it with fondness wherever I go in life.

